

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 26, 2021

1:29 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Mia Costello, Chair
Senator Joshua Revak, Vice Chair
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Gary Stevens

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 12

"An Act relating to temporary courtesy licenses for military spouses; and relating to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development."

- MOVED SB 12 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13

Supporting broadband deployment in the state; recognizing the benefits of broadband; urging facilitation of broadband deployment; urging engagement with stakeholders; urging the United States Congress to include broadband in 2021 federal infrastructure legislation; and urging the Alaska delegation in Congress to advocate for flexible broadband funding parameters.

- HEARING CANCELED

SENATE BILL NO. 77

Supporting broadband deployment in the state; recognizing the benefits of broadband; urging facilitation of broadband deployment; urging engagement with stakeholders; urging the United States Congress to include broadband in 2021 federal infrastructure legislation; and urging the Alaska delegation in Congress to advocate for flexible broadband funding parameters.

- HEARING CANCELED

SENATE BILL NO. 78

Supporting broadband deployment in the state; recognizing the benefits of broadband; urging facilitation of broadband deployment; urging engagement with stakeholders; urging the United States Congress to include broadband in 2021 federal infrastructure legislation; and urging the Alaska delegation in Congress to advocate for flexible broadband funding parameters.

- BILL HEARING CANCELED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 12

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY SPOUSE COURTESY LICENSE

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) KAWASAKI

01/22/21	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
01/22/21	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/21	(S)	STA, L&C
03/04/21	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/04/21	(S)	Heard & Held
03/04/21	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
03/11/21	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/11/21	(S)	Heard & Held
03/11/21	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
04/22/21	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/22/21	(S)	Moved SB 12 Out of Committee
04/22/21	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
04/23/21	(S)	STA RPT 3DP 1NR
04/23/21	(S)	DP: SHOWER, KAWASAKI, COSTELLO
04/23/21	(S)	NR: HOLLAND
04/26/21	(S)	L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

JOE HAYES, Staff
Senator Scott Kawasaki
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SB 12 on behalf of the sponsor.

SARA CHAMBERS, Director
Division of Corporations & Business and Professional Licensing
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SB 12.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:29:53 PM](#)

CHAIR MIA COSTELLO called the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:29 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Gray-Jackson, Revak, and Chair Costello.

SB 12-MILITARY SPOUSE COURTESY LICENSE

[1:30:35 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 12 "An Act relating to temporary courtesy licenses for military spouses; and relating to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development."

[1:31:17 PM](#)

JOE HAYES, Staff, Senator Scott Kawasaki, Juneau, Alaska, introduced SB 12 on behalf of the sponsor paraphrasing the following sponsor statement:

In 2011, House Bill 28 was passed into law to provide expedited temporary courtesy licenses to eligible individuals transferred to Alaska with their active duty service member spouse, so they can practice their trade without experiencing extensive wait times for licensure approval while they complete state requirements. For a military spouse, expedited temporary courtesy licenses are the fastest method of obtaining licensure so they can get to work quickly after relocating to Alaska.

Many states have passed similar legislation into law. However, states such as Washington and Connecticut also included a reporting mechanism so the Legislature and Joint Armed Services Committee equivalent in that state could track the executive branch's progress of implementation. HB 28 did not include a reporting requirement when it was passed.

Senate Bill 12 would require the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development to prepare an annual report of courtesy licenses issued the previous fiscal year. This simple reporting mechanism will help facilitate communication between occupational boards, the state agency, the U.S. Department of Defense who assists in relocating service members and families, as well as Alaska

legislators with service members in their districts. The bill will also aid in making occupational board staff and legislators more aware of what opportunities are available for helping military spouses enter the Alaska the workforce.

Other states have implemented a similar expedited licensing program to allow military spouses to transfer their professional credentials quickly and contribute to the local economies. While Alaska's program is a model for other states, its implementation has stalled with few eligible professionals taking advantage of the program and spouses reporting delays despite the program being in effect for eight years. Senate Bill 12 would help identify inefficiencies in the program before they cause delays in productivity and ensure the program is working as intended.

Introduced in 2018 as House Bill 262, the bill passed the House unanimously and gained bipartisan support in the Senate before it failed to reach the floor for a vote. The concept of this bill is listed as a priority for the U.S. Department of Defense by the state liaison serving Alaska.

The passage of SB 12 would improve communication between state and federal government agencies and active duty families. By improving efficiency and awareness about what opportunities are available, the bill will help welcome military families to Alaska.

I respectfully urge your support of SB 12, a corrective bill that will help ease the transition of military families and get more licensed professionals to work in our communities near military installations.

[1:34:38 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if he agreed with her understanding that the phrase "expedited application procedure" means that application moves to the top of the list, although it is not necessarily approved more quickly than any other application.

MR. HAYES deferred to Ms. Chambers.

[1:35:31 PM](#)

SARA CHAMBERS, Director, Division of Corporations & Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Juneau, Alaska, confirmed that in this context the term "expediting" means that the division moves the completed applications in the front of the queue and moves them through the process as quickly as possible. She noted that the division has no control over some of the delays in the process.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if the division tracks the number and type of licenses that military spouses apply for.

MS. CHAMBERS replied they are tracked anecdotally but the division's software system is not set up to run a specific report on military spouse applications and licenses. She acknowledged that the bill requires the division to run that type of report.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked if the administration supports SB 12.

MS. CHAMBERS replied the administration has not taken a position on SB 12 and the reporting mechanism.

CHAIR COSTELLO advised that the committee received a letter of support from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). Copies are in the bill packet. She asked Senator Revak if this bill would help to show Alaska's support for military families during a potential Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process when DoD is looking at potential military base closures.

[1:39:11 PM](#)

SENATOR REVAK answered yes; this definitely is a factor when DoD goes through the process of determining which bases to retain and which to BRAC.

[1:39:42 PM](#)

CHAIR COSTELLO opened public testimony on SB 12; finding none, she closed public testimony and looked to the will of the committee.

[1:40:01 PM](#)

SENATOR REVAK moved to report SB 12, work order 32-LS0143\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

CHAIR COSTELLO advised that the bill carried a zero fiscal note. She found no objection and SB 12 moved from the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee.

1:40:52 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Costello adjourned the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting at 1:40 p.m.